A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

Connections

September 2006

"Seat Of Your Pants" Tour Will Examine SRI Improvements

To make sure highway improvements are moving ahead as promised, MoDOT officials have hit the road to inspect the state's busiest highways. The tour kicked off Aug. 18 in Columbia and will run through October with highway engineers examining the roadways that are included in the Smooth Roads Initiative.

"We're looking for the same things drivers look for – smoother pavement, brighter stripes, wider shoulders – everything we promised we'd deliver," said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. " I call this trip the 'Seat Of Your Pants' tour, because we'll be judging the quality of these roads the same way drivers do – by how it feels in the seat of your pants."

We will personally inspect every one of the 2,200 miles that are being upgraded by the end of the year. Where projects are already complete, we'll make sure the pavement, markings and safety features are top-notch. Where work is not yet complete, we'll check work zones, time schedules and quality of work to guarantee the project will be completed correctly and on time.

"We've been busier than ever with all this work," Rahn said. "The challenge is exciting and the benefits will be tremendous, but we've got to make sure we'll be able to meet our goal. That's what this trip is all about."

Shane Peck

System Management Director Don Hillis talks to Tonya Hawkins, a reporter with the *Lincoln County Journal*, about highway improvements made under the Smooth Roads Initiative in District 3.

"Seat Of Your Pants" Inspection List

- **Pavement** – Completed projects should be free of cracks, ruts and potholes, and feel smooth to drivers.
- **Stripes** – New pavement stripes should be brighter, wider and easier to see, especially at night and in the rain. Many are rumble stripes – grooves in the pavement that are painted with stripes – to alert motorists when they're leaving their driving lane.
- **Signs** – Thousands of new roadway signs along these routes should be brighter and easier to read. Included are new roadside markers on the interstates that will improve emer gency response by providing the exact location of stranded motorists

Your DOT Just Got Greener

MoDOT Tests Hybrid Bucket Trucks

by Kristi Jamison

MoDOT recently stepped up its efforts to become a greener organization by becoming the first government agency in the nation to participate in a pilot program testing new hybrid technology applied to bucket trucks.

As a participant in the Utility Hybrid Truck Pilot Program, Fleet Management will place the hybrid biodiesel/electric trucks in service along with comparably sized conventional trucks to measure performance, reliability and business benefits. The hybrids and baseline conventional trucks have been equipped with monitoring devices that will compare the emissions and fuel economy of each type of truck. The hybrids will be field tested for 18 months at district offices in Kansas City, St. Louis and Joplin.

Due to the results of earlier tests, MoDOT expects the hybrid bucket trucks will cut fuel costs and smog-producing emissions in half, while also reducing maintenance costs, decreasing noise and providing an alternative power source in emergencies.

"MoDOT is proud to participate in a pilot program that will enhance our ability to protect the environment and realize substantial fuel cost savings at a time when

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Cathy Morrison

Director Pete Rahn signals his approval of MoDOT's participation in the Utility Hybrid Truck Pilot Program.

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District 3 employee was at the right place at the right time

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Storm Damage
District 9 crews clean up after Mother Nature

Charitable Campaign Kicks Off With Competition

by Patti Knopke

MoDOT's competitive side will be showcased in this year's Missouri State Employees Charitable Campaign.

Employees have been split into teams according to the MoDOT organizational chart. The team with the highest percentage of participation will receive a reward beyond expectations - the opportunity for the head of their team to work someone else's job for a day.

Depending on what needs to be done at the time, Pete Rahn, MoDOT's director and captain of the Organizational Support Team, may end up working as a construction inspector on an SRI job or as a bridge inspector. Chief Engineer Kevin Keith, captain of the District/Multimodal Team, could have to work on a crack seal crew. If the System Facilitation Team headed by Chief Financial Officer Roberta Broeker wins, she'll work in Travel Services.

Dave Nichols, captain of the Project Delivery Team, will serve as a technician in the Central Office lab, helping with testing of asphalt, concrete or striping materials. Don Hillis, the captain of the System Management team, has decided to take the competition one step further. He'll work in the division within his team that generates the highest participation.

In the last two years, more than $2.1 million has been raised for charitable organizations through the campaign. Both years, MoDOT has placed second

in monetary donations, giving more than all other state agencies and offices except the Department of Corrections.

Employees are encouraged to combine their efforts to raise money for the campaign. Past fundraisers have included hosting chili suppers, ice cream socials or silent auctions, as well as selling wreaths and theme baskets. Along with fundraisers, one-time donations can be made by check or money order, and donations can be automatically deducted from your paycheck each pay period.

A printed booklet giving information on participating charitable organizations and pledge cards will be available soon. Pledge cards should be turned in from Sept. 15-30. For more information, call MoDOT's MSECC Coordinator Cheryl Bonner at 573-526-2470 or visit http://msecc.mo.gov.

175 Reap First-Round Benefits of Performance Plus

PerformancePlus

by Sally Oxenhandler

Although Sikeston construction project office assistant Denise Hopper said she doesn't have any big plans for spending her Performance Plus incentive, she was "very thrilled" to receive it.

Hopper is one of the 175 district employees who received the first incentive payments made under MoDOT's Performance Plus pilot program. More than $52,000 in incentives was distributed to employees in eight districts in August.

Under the program, the 175 employees in 15 project offices saved more than $4.2 million from April to June by minimizing project cost overruns. Specifically, Performance Plus challenges them to achieve a final construction cost of one percent above the contract award amount (or less) on projects in our Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The project savings then fund the incentive payments.

The following project offices achieved the Performance Plus goal for the first quarter: Bellefontaine, Cameron, Carthage, Chillicothe, Columbia, Festus, Hampton, Hannibal, Marshall, Nevada, Neosho, St. Clair, St. Peters, Sikeston and Willow Springs.

District 7 turned out to be a double winner – all of the district's project offices earned the incentive and so did the district. Districts 1 and 9 also brought in their projects for the quarter within one percent of the contract award amount. Employees in the successful project offices in those three districts received $400 incentives while workers in the successful project offices in the other districts took home $250. District 6 missed the incentive by just a hair.

"Everybody was very happy to receive their incentives," said Hopper. "It gives an uplift to employees, especially with how bad the economy is."

Director Rahn, with the help of a Performance Plus committee, launched the program earlier this year as a way to reward employees for a job well done.

"I'm thrilled to be able to reward some of our hard-working and dedicated employees for exceptional performance - especially at a time when they've been asked to deliver a record amount of work," said Director Pete Rahn. "This program is one way we can increase our agency's total compensation package, while also providing value to Missouri taxpayers."

Under the pilot, which will run until the end of the year, about 550 employees are eligible to earn up to $2,000 in cash incentives per year for meeting one of our most important tangible results: fast projects that are of great value. This value was selected because it relates directly to our core business, is highly visible to the traveling public and provides an opportunity for significant impact.

"Performance Plus is a totally new concept for us," said Mara Campbell, Organizational Results director, who led the Performance Plus committee. "We don't have the same flexibility as the private sector to compensate our employees, so we needed to come up with an innovative program that pays for itself through cost savings."

Campbell said MoDOT management would continue to assess the pilot program results over the next several months to determine whether to offer the incentive program to other employees who identify long-term, cost-saving business solutions.

For more information on Performance Plus, visit *wwwi*.

Burning Questions Answered at the Coffee Shop

by Patti Knopke

CoffeeShop Q&A

Have you ever heard someone say, "Why does MoDOT do that?" or "What was MoDOT thinking?"

Now you can find the answers at Coffee Shop Q&A - a one-stop Internet shop that provides the answers to frequently asked questions about MoDOT and its operations. Topics covered on the site range from the Smooth Roads Initiative to work zones.

Commissioner Mike Kehoe came up with the idea for Coffee Shop Q&A – a place where transportation questions could be answered directly by the people who work most closely with the areas in question.

The Coffee Shop Q&A page was added to MoDOT's Internet site in August and can be found under News and Information at www.modot.org. Information on the page will be updated regularly.

If you have any frequently asked questions, please send them to Matt Hiebert at Charles.Hiebert@modot.mo.gov. Then look for the answers at the Coffee Shop!

Community Relations Coordinator Sally Oxenhandler and Community Relations Specialist Alex Egharevba talk shop over a cup of joe.

Greener DOT

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gas and diesel prices continue to rise," said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. "We look forward to learning more about how these vehicles will compare to the conventional trucks in our fleet and how they can help us make the best use of taxpayer dollars."

While a conventional truck must remain running at a work site to operate the hydraulic arm that moves the bucket, new technology enables the hybrid truck's engine to be shut off at the work site. As a result, emissions are nearly cut in half and the hybrid uses between 40 to 60 percent less fuel. If diesel fuel prices were to remain at July's average of $2.88 per gallon in Missouri, MoDOT could save approximately $3,134 a year per vehicle by replacing conventional trucks with hybrid trucks in its fleet.

The hybrid truck is manufactured by Warrenville, Ill.-based International and Cleveland, Ohio-based Eaton Corporation, a manufacturer of electrical systems and components. The truck's aerial device is manufactured by Altec Industries in St. Joseph, Mo.

"It's very exciting to see MoDOT take this aggressive move toward a cleaner environment," said Shawn Brougham, manager of product engineering for Altec Industries. "I want to thank MoDOT for having the courage to be one of the first participants in this program."

For Your Benefit

Watch Your Mail: Benefit Information To Be Distributed On CD

Active employees and currently enrolled retirees in the dental/vision plan through Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan can look for your dental and vision plan open enrollment information and your Cafeteria Plan booklet to be mailed to your home in the form of a CD.

MCHCP recently announced it would no longer mail the dental/vision Member Handbook and Enrollment Guide in printed form, opting for the quicker, cheaper electronic version. MCHCP said the change gives employees quick access to benefit information and saves printing and mailing costs. The CD is also compact, which makes for easy storage and handling.

If you aren't able to play a CD at home or work, you can request a printed copy of the 2007 Dental/Vision Member Handbook and Enrollment Guide by calling MCHCP at 800-487-0771 or logging onto MCHCP's Web site at https://my.mchcp.org. You will need your MCHCPid or Social Security number and PIN to access the Web site.

The open enrollment period for active employees for the dental and vision benefits for Jan. 1, 2007 coverage is during the month of October. If you know you need a printed form, contact MCHCP now.

For more information on the Cafeteria Plan, visit www.mocafe.com. Call MCHCP's Benefit Specialists at 800-487-0771 to ask questions about the state-sponsored dental and vision coverage.

Health Care Options To Change Next Year

What's better than a four percent state pay raise than an even bigger raise? Well, probably not much, but there is some good news about our health care benefits that will be almost as kind to our wallets as our recent pay raise.

First, the Missouri State Highways and Transportation Commission agreed at their August meeting to once again cover the entire premium cost increase for our medical plan. That means current PPO subscribers - active employees, retirees, surviving spouses and those on disability - will have no increase in out-of-pocket health care premium costs next year. This makes the seventh straight year that active employees in the PPO plan have had no increase in out-of-pocket premiums!

Second on the list is that next year, we'll no longer offer an HMO benefit plan (the current Open Access III plan) as a health care option. For the majority of you this won't be an issue because our current PPO benefits will not change. In fact, you'll actually experience some savings because the new plan will enable us to get better provider discounts. That means in some cases you'll pay less for your health care services.

The reason we're dropping the HMO is simple. It has become too expensive for either our employees or the plan to continue to offer this option. Out-of-pocket premium costs paid by employees would have increased substantially next year if we continued to offer an HMO.

What this means for all employees is that the $3.5 million of savings we estimate due to eliminating the HMO plan can be used to hold down everyone's out-of-pocket premiums. This is in large part what made it feasible for the Commission to cover the entire premium increase again in 2007.

"While we understand this is a significant change for a small percentage of our members, we believe this is the best move for MoDOT employees and retirees," said Jeff Padgett, Employee Benefits Manager. "We just couldn't justify offering a program that couldn't support itself. Our new program will actually cost most of our employees less in out-of-pocket expenses related to medical services, so we're definitely pleased with the direction we're headed."

Current Open Access III subscribers will receive a letter providing more specific information on the change. In the next few months, Employee Benefits staff will visit with employees in the districts most affected – primarily Districts 4 and 6. If you have any questions about this change, please contact your insurance representative or the Central Office Employee Benefits staff at 877-863-9406 or (573) 526-0138.

Keeping the Lines Visible

by Megan Mills

Laserlux retroreflectometer is a fancy name, but the job it does is simple. It is an instrument that measures pavement markings' retroreflectivity to ensure the markings are visible to nighttime drivers.

In July, MoDOT purchased its first laserlux device to accomplish that task. The equipment, which is mounted to the outside of the vehicle, scans the markings with a laser beam and measures how much light is returned.

"The benefits of having our own laserlux will be the flexibility to take readings on a larger scale than we've done in the past, while reducing costs," said Jim Brocksmith, MoDOT technical support engineer. "We have already hired someone to take the readings and purchased a van for the laserlux."

A laserlux retroreflectometer is mounted outside of a van so it can measure how well pavement markings are reflecting light. This instrument will help MoDOT determine how visible striping is to the driver, particularly at night.

This device can effectively measure the retroreflectivity even when traveling at normal speeds.

Visible pavement markings are key in keeping drivers safe on Missouri's roadways. To ensure these markings are visible to drivers, MoDOT must regularly monitor the marking's retroreflectivity.

In the past, MoDOT hired an outside vendor to measure these pavement markings. These readings were costly and the vendor didn't measure all the pavement markings, just the ones installed by contract and at certain locations.

MoDOT plans to start testing the unit at the end of the summer, once all the components are together. The measurements will be useful in experimenting with new types of pavement markings, quality assurance and for reporting performance results in MoDOT's Tracker.

"We consider this laserlux to be a good investment, because it will allow us to have greater quality control measurements of all of our pavement markings," said Brocksmith. "Greater quality control means safer roads."

New T-shirts Add to MoDOT's Greener Image

by Kristi Jamison

Under a pilot program last year, field employees tested a new high visibility t-shirt to determine if it was up to par as a substitute for the safety vest. Well the verdict is in, and the overwhelming opinion came out in favor of the lime green hi-vis t-shirt. Those who participated in the program particularly liked the visibility, comfort and overall safety aspect of the new shirts. And since these new threads are retroreflective and meet federal safety criteria, you can now wear them instead of vests.

As a result, all field employees can now participate in both the green safety t-shirt program and the uniform program.

For example, the new t-shirt can be worn with the class E pant to make a class three suit for night work.

T-shirts in a wide variety of sizes are being stocked now at the distribution center. All field employees can order t-shirts at no cost through a stock requisition document or a stock transfer document in FMS, or contact your supervisor for replacements. The anticipated t-shirt availability date is Aug. 31.

MoDOT Helps Employees Further Their Education

by Patti Knopke

Have you ever considered going back to school? Are finances preventing you from obtaining your diploma or furthering your education? If you are a full-time salaried employee who has been employed with MoDOT for six

Mary Shrubb

months you may be eligible to receive educational assistance. MoDOT employees may receive reimbursement for general education diplomas, courses at vocational and technical schools, and college courses at the graduate and undergraduate level. The program has helped many employees throughout the department.

Mary Shrubb, executive assistant to the district engineer in District 9, has utilized the educational assistance program and said, "My previous job had educational assistance, so I asked about it here." Shrubb has worked at MoDOT for four years and is working towards her bachelor's degree in business. She has completed 45 hours. "It's stimulating, and it will pay off at MoDOT through promotions and the ability to move around in the agency." Shrubb sees the program as a win-win situation. "It's beneficial to you and your employer. You can't go wrong!"

Cathy Trigg, client relations liaison in Information Systems, has been with MoDOT for nearly 14 years. Trigg started in Human Resources and learned about the program through

Cathy Trigg

other employees who were participating. She received her undergraduate degree in computer information systems and then went on to get her master's in business administration from Lincoln University in 2004.

Getting her degree was a personal goal for Trigg. "Stepping into that first class was the biggest challenge. After that, the sense of accomplishment kept me going," Trigg said. "I had more confidence in applying for other jobs, knowing I met the requirements. I graduated valedictorian of my class. In order to be promotable, I knew I would have to complete my education."

Both agree that you shouldn't be discouraged or overwhelmed when considering going back to school. "Those interested should go for it. If you are busy, just take one class at a time. There is no pressure," Shrubb said.

Trigg is also an advocate of the program, "Making time to attend classes and do homework are only two challenges of going back to school. Cost is another and without the educational assistance program, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to get my degree. All it takes is commitment and the willingness to take the first step."

For more information on the educational assistance program, please contact Sue Feltrop, Human Resources, at 573-751-9200.

Employees Join Highway Watch

by Revee Booth

Since MoDOT entered into a partnership with the Missouri Motor Carriers Association to promote the Highway Watch program, hundreds of our employees have been trained in and joined this national security program.

The Highway Watch program, sponsored by the Transportation Security Administration, is yet another tool to increase safety and help in the war against terrorism. With millions of highway miles, numerous bridges, overpasses and other potential terrorist targets in the United States, a nationwide program was needed to help transportation workers, commercial and public truck and bus drivers and others protect these resources.

The 30-minute training program teaches participants how to protect all our bridges and other potential targets, provides highway security data and promotes safe driving skills and habits. The program also improves coordination between local, state and federal emergency management, public safety, and law-enforcement officials.

"I've taken the course and am a registered Highway Watch member, and would encourage all MoDOT employees to do the same," said System Management Director Don Hillis. "Who better to keep an eye on the highways than the people who are responsible for the system?"

Anyone wishing to participate in the program should notify their supervisor.

MoDOT Employees to the Rescue

MoDOT employees are often commended for their selfless acts of helping others. Recently two of our co-workers came to the rescue of fellow citizens in need.

Craig Vories recently sent an e-mail to thank a motor assistance shift supervisor in District 6, who, although he was off duty, stopped to help him change a tire.

"I would like to commend Jeffrey B. Roberts on his help in replacing a blown tire on Friday night [July 14]. His customer service, friendliness, expertise and willingness to help even while off duty going home from work on a Friday night will not be forgotten. In a time of many others blindly going by with their lives and not helping those in need, it is very nice to have people like Jeffrey around. Thanks go out to Jeffrey and the Missouri Dept. of Transportation."

In another incident, Intermediate Historic Preservation Specialist Travis Tesreau and a friend were hunting frogs at Ben Branch Lake when they faintly heard someone yelling for help. They found an elderly man in waist-deep water and stuck in knee-deep mud. The man had been night fishing for catfish in the lake when his boat hit a snag, causing him to fall out. The boat quickly sank, leaving the man without any flotation devices. After some effort, Travis and his friend were able to get the exhausted man out of the lake. They took him back to his truck and made sure he made it home safely.

September Service Anniversaries

30 Years

Mark K. Meador	D4
James R. Riggins	D10
Tim Shaffer	D10
Roger L. Tarver	D10
Rita A. Fester	CO
Mary J. Pointer	CO
Jennifer L. Ranabargar	CO

25 Years

George E. Ellett	D4
Lance D. Tipton	D5
George A. Conway	D6
Daniel J. Fryer	D6
Marvin J. Smith	CO

15 Years

William E. Guinn	D1
Roger P. Halley	D2
Kenneth L. Lynch	D4
Mia M. Puthumana	D4
Robin L. Warren	D4
Janis E. Evers	D5
Kevin K. Steiner	D6
Charles M. Wills	D6
Robert K. Baugh	D7
Janet L. Doty	D7
Travis J. Fischer	D7
Dave Gordon	D8
Paul R. Loftin	D8
Alan B. Casey	D9
Janice L. Redburn	D9
John M. Cave	CC
Ronald L. Bollinger	D10
Gary D. King	D10
Dewayn J. Gaddy	CO
Cindy L. Norman	CO
Christine A. Peper	CO
Beverly J. Schepers	CO

10 Years

Shelly R. Aebersold	D1
Lana S. Allen	D1
Darrell L. Benedict	D1
Kenneth R. Joliffe	D2
Curtis R. Pegelow	D2
Christopher R. Switzer	D2
Mark W. O'Dowd	D4
Christopher R. Engelbrecht	D5
Eric D. Fletcher	D6
Martin K. Randall	D7
Kimbel L. Dye	D8
Shay H. Wehmer	D8
Julie M. Bleich	CO
Larry W. Carver	CO
B. Jacquelyn Kampeter	CO

5 Years

Danny D.Willson	D1
Bryan K. Phillips	D3
Clifford D. Everts	D4
Jay A. Ware	D4
Jason R. Grant	D8
Shawn M. Nilges	D8
Donald R. Thomas	D9
Steven A. Billings	CO
Pamela L. Cremer	CO
Billy D. Hampton	CO
Julie A. Luebbering	CO
Cynthia L. Surface	CO
Michael B. Wade	CO

July Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service
Steven Brammer	D3	33
Anna Cobb	D8	12
Gary Fisher	D10	29
Jerry Johnson	D4	24
Kenneth Mackey	D7	37
Dennis Marler	D10	32
Ronald Peavler	D2	30
Larry Smalley	D7	20
Donald Webber	D4	7

In Memoriam

Active Employees

Ricquia Ross	D6	July 1
James "J.R." Schaefer	D6	July 6

Retirees

Bobbie V. Lacy	D1	July 1
John V. Dorman, Jr.	D3	July 4
Khoat V. Doan	D8	July 16
Clayton L. Lindley	D1	July 17
Gerald E. Hamilton	D1	July 19
Winfred O. Henry	D4	July 19
Finis E. Capps	D10	July 20
George M. Bryant	D8	July 22

CO
Central Office

Golf Tournament Helps When Tragedy Strikes

by Patti Knopke

MoDOT's annual golf tournament to benefit the Missouri 10-33 Benevolent Fund will be held Sept. 11 at the Columbia Country Club. With a full set of 48 teams, MoDOT could raise more than $11,500 to benefit families in need of assistance.

From left to right, System Management Director Don Hillis, former Governor Roger Wilson and Employee Benefits Manager Jeff Padgett wait for their turn as Dave Nichols, Program Delivery director, sizes up his putt during last year's 10-33 Benevolent Fund golf tournament.

The Missouri 10-33 Benevolent Fund is a public charity that helps families of public service personnel, including highway workers, who have died in the line of duty. The fund, named after code 10-33: officer in need of assistance, has helped more than 40 families of public safety officers, including five families of MoDOT employees killed in the line of duty.

"This is a great charity that provides resources to those families that have been struck with tragedy. I hope we never have to give another employee's family a check from the fund, but we must help it grow so families can receive the benefits when necessary," said Don Hillis, director of System Management and MoDOT's tournament coordinator. "The fund gives families the breathing room they need while they sort through the tragedy of losing a loved one in the line of duty."

If you are not a golfer, but would like to contribute to the fund, you can send direct contributions to: Missouri 10-33 Benevolent Fund, 1101 Lakeview, Suite F, Columbia, MO 65201. Donations may also be made as part of your combined charitable contribution.

For more information or to sign up for the tournament, contact Don Hillis at 573-751-2976 or Don.Hillis@modot.mo.gov.

Carriers Benefit From MCS Training Courses

by DeAnne Bonnot

Do you remember studying for your learner's permit? It seemed you'd never remember all the information in the drivers' guide.

Professional drivers and the companies that employ them must follow many more rules than those of us in four-wheeled vehicles. The rules are spelled out in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations and in state law. Violations are treated seriously, but the laws can be confusing, even to seasoned highway veterans.

To encourage understanding and compliance with these laws, MoDOT's Motor Carrier Services division offers free training sessions in locations throughout the state each summer and winter. People who haul hazardous materials can take a specialized version of the training. A third version offers carrier safety and compliance training to farmers who often don't realize that some of the hauling they do is subject to trucking law.

"Carriers tell us they appreciate the chance to review the rules and ask questions," said Ben Goodin, motor carrier enforcement administrator. "Often they encourage colleagues and competitors to attend the classes."

Ken Sowers, transportation enforcement investigator, explains drug and alcohol testing requirements during a motor carrier safety seminar in Jefferson City. MCS personnel in other offices lead training when sessions are held in their regions.

At the end of the training, MCS instructors offer Highway Watch training to those who are willing to stick around and commit to participating in the anti-terrorism program. Often the majority of carriers sign up.

Summer 2006 training is complete and planning for winter classes is under way. The schedule will be posted soon on the MCS Web site, *www.modot.org/mcs*.

Mizzou graduate student Patrick Earney (second from the right) facilitated Transportation and Civil Engineering, or TRAC, Summer Camp activities, some of which took place at the University of Missouri-Columbia campus in July. For this activity, students "purchased" materials to build K'nex bridges that were later tested to destruction. The strongest bridge held approximately 50 pounds.

On the Move: Central Office Sees Some Changes

by Patti Knopke

Several office moves under way at Central Office have caused a chain reaction. Here is a run through to help you locate everyone's new office space.

Governmental Relations moved around the corner on the ground floor of the Central Office building to the area across from the break room. An IS unit most recently occupied that space.

Multimedia Services, formerly known as the Photo Lab, has moved from the Central Office Annex (the garage) into the space vacated by Governmental Relations, allowing Central Office's Community Relations staff to consolidate in one location. This consolidation will be beneficial for both groups.

"We work closely with Multimedia Services on a variety of projects, so this move will help us be more efficient," said Allison Campbell, a graphic design intern in Community Relations.

Cultural Resources will eventually set up shop in the space vacated by Multimedia Services. Joining them will be Design's Environmental Section – another move that will consolidate two areas that work closely together. Information Systems will take over the space left vacant by Cultural Resources allowing them to further consolidate their work groups.

Another Central Office move has taken the Employee Benefits unit to 1913 Williams St. where the Retirement System office is located. Employee Benefits filled space vacated by another IS unit that was consolidated with the rest of IS.

For now, the space vacated by Employee Benefits in the Central Office building will be used to house various work units as their spaces are renovated.

"In addition to consolidating work units, we've been able to correct a lot of building deficiencies and implement some energy conservation measures as we've renovated these areas," said Chris Devore, Central Office's general services manager. "Last year we saved $31,500 by reducing our kilowatt usage in Central Office."

for more info

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D1 Northwest

Community Partnerships

Story and photos by Holly Murphy

State Rep. Brad Lager recently brought concerns from constituents in Nodaway County to District Engineer Don Wichern. Nodaway County citizens were concerned about the intersections of Route 148 and Route 71 and Route CC and Route 71. Accidents had occurred in these two locations recently and a number of people felt installing rumble strips would alert motorists and increase safety at the intersections.

Don Wichern met with Rep. Lager, the Nodaway County Sheriff's office and the Missouri State Highway Patrol at the intersections to discuss their concerns. Within days of their meeting, the Maryville area crews were on the task. They not only installed the rumble strips, but they also installed larger stop signs with flashing lights.

Wichern commented, "I cannot say enough good things about how quickly the local office and area maintenance crews responded to this request. It fits perfectly with our Blueprint for Safer Roads Initiative."

The Maryville area maintenance crews responded quickly to the concerns about the Nodaway County intersection.

Citizens in the Nodaway County area are pleased with the newly installed rumble strips at two seperate intersections. Concerns received by Rep. Brad Lager prompted the installation of the rumble strips.

Around The District

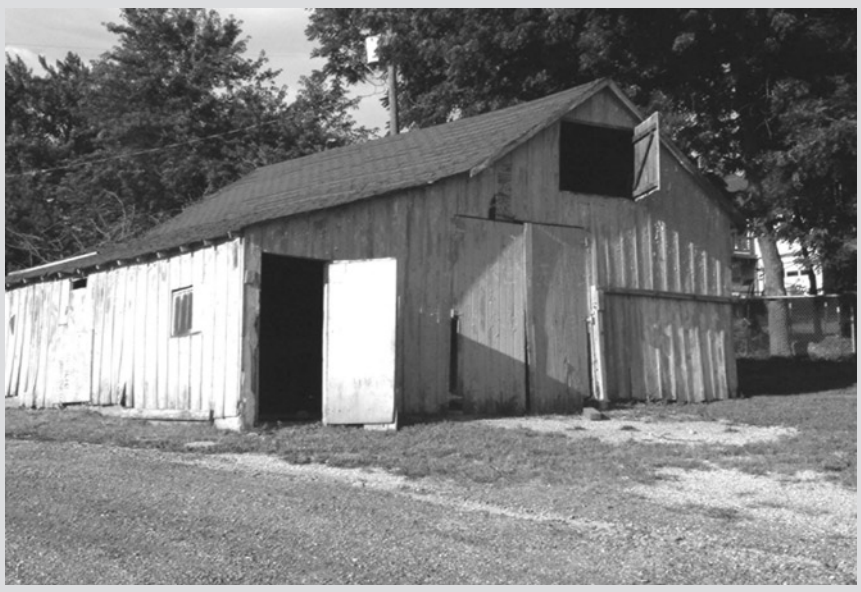
Photos by Holly Murphy

The District Safety Office recently held a basic safety training for all office personnel who were not safety sensitive. Attendees had the opportunity to use fire extinguishers to put out a fire.

Shannah Taylor, pictured left, receives his 40-year service award plaque from District Engineer Don Wichern. Shannah retired as a senior financial services technician with the Business and Benefits department on Aug. 1.

A Piece Of History Gone

Story and Photos by Holly Murphy



Called "The Pony Barn," the old barn located on the Northwest District office complex was recently demolished. The barn was located in the back of the maintenance lot and was the oldest MoDOT building in the entire district. Many years ago, when the department began, this is where the crews kept the work horses and harnesses to start their day. A bit different than the maintenance facilities we have now. It was a little sad to see a part of MoDOT history go.

for more info

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D2 NorthCentral

Do Seat Belts Save Lives?

by Nancy Davis and Darin Biegel

Does wearing a seat belt really help? If you ask three MoDOT employees involved in a recent vehicle accident near LaPlata the answer would be yes.

Equipment Specialist Jeff Miller and Senior Crew Workers Rick McCumber and Bobby Lockard were traveling north on Route 63 on July 20 in Jeff's MoDOT 1999 three-quarter ton Ford pickup. They were heading to Kirksville for training on a new piece of equipment. As they neared the intersection of Route 63 and Route 156 they were struck on the driver's side by an

MFA fertilizer truck traveling east on Route 156. After impact with the other vehicle, the MoDOT truck traveled down a large embankment where it came to rest. Passers-by noticed the incident and called 911.

Moments later two other MoDOT employees traveling to the same training class arrived on the scene and stopped to assist those involved in the incident. Mechanic Supervisor Darin Biegel and Equipment Specialist Danny Koch, both from the District Garage in Macon, said it wasn't until they exited their vehicle and headed down the embankment that they realized it was fellow MoDOT employees they were going to help. Soon after their arrival, the Atlanta Maintenance Crew and District 2 Survey Crew, who were both working in the area and were alerted to the incident via radio and scanner, arrived to assist.

Bobby was riding in the back seat of the extended cab truck and was able to crawl out through the back window. Rick was a passenger in the front seat and once he was able to get the door open he was also able to exit the vehicle. With the major impact of the crash being on the driver's side door, efforts to open the door by hand to assist Jeff were unsuccessful. Darin, who is also a Red Cross CPR instructor, said he realized even if they were able to get the door open they could not and should not attempt to get Jeff out of the truck until emergency responders were there with the proper equipment to ensure no further injury.

Once Darin was certain 911 and other emergency teams had been notified he contacted Joey Hinton, General Services Manager, and also alerted Nancy Davis in the Risk Management office who arrived about 30 minutes after the incident. By that time the other MoDOT employees had assisted in picking up the various tools strewn about from the many toolboxes in the back of Jeff's truck. Others had helped the emergency crews carry needed rescue equipment from the ambulances to the bottom of the embankment. Everyone was helping to do their part for fellow employees. It was a true example of teamwork and thoughtfulness.

During conversations with Jeff, Rick and Bobby after the accident, they were asked if they had been wearing their seat belts. Each answered "Yes, and I have the bruises to prove it!" More importantly, each realized how much worse their injuries could have been, and probably would have been, had they not been buckled up.

Bobby Lockard commented that he had been wearing his sunglasses when the accident occurred and didn't notice they were missing until he was out of the vehicle and had walked around the front of the truck. He noticed them

lying on the dashboard and he recalled thinking he knew where he would have gone if he had not been wearing his seat belt. Buckling the seat belt, something that takes only seconds to do, may have saved the life of one or all three of the guys in that truck.

Special thanks go out to the Atlanta Maintenance Crew and District 2 Survey Crew for all the help they provided that morning; to Darin and Danny who made sure the appropriate people and offices were notified in a timely manner and for traveling to Kirksville with Rick and Bobby to assist at the hospital; to Joey Hinton and Nancy Davis for relaying updates to the District Office and traveling to Columbia to make certain the details were taken care of during Jeff's admission to the hospital and for being with Jeff and his family; and for any others who may have been overlooked but who played a part in getting through a very difficult day at MoDOT. If you see any of these people throughout the district tell them thank you for looking out for others. And remember to buckle up any time you are in a moving vehicle.

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Were You Convinced?

Sgt. Brent Bernhardt with the Missouri State Highway Patrol recently demonstrated a new seat belt convincer machine at the district office. Equipment Specialist Danny Koch took a turn on the new machine.

The convincer was purchased by the North Central District Coalition for Roadway Safety to help educate north central Missourians on the importance of wearing safety belts.

During the demonstration the pickup truck Jeff, Ricky and Bobby were traveling in was also placed on the parking lot next to the convincer. It was the first time many district employees had seen the vehicle, which is quite a testament to wearing your safety belt.

"I have seen many vehicles in much better condition than this truck whose occupants unfortunately did not survive because they weren't wearing their safety belts," said Bernhardt. "That is why I take the roll over machine and now this new convincer all over our Troop B area to help educate the public on the importance of wearing your safety belt."

Watch Out for the Other Driver!

Between May 17 and Aug. 9, District 2 employees, at no fault of their own, were involved in six separate accidents. All six accidents were caused by other drivers who either lost control, crossed a median, rear-ended or side-crashed into the vehicles.

The accidents involved trucks parked in work zones, trucks parked on shoulders setting signs and removing trash, a slow moving truck spraying weeds, and a truck driving down the road to a meeting.

Several employees, including those who were inside the non-moving vehicles, suffered only moderate injuries because they were wearing their safety belts. Some inmates also sustained moderate injuries when working on the shoulder of a roadway when one of the accidents occurred.

We have to be constantly aware of our surroundings, watch the other driver, and most importantly, wear our safety belts whether the vehicle we are in is moving or sitting still. We cannot control what other drivers will do, but we have to watch out for ourselves so we can come home safe every night.

D3 Northeast

Rich to the Rescue

Rich Sanders and his family enjoy spending an afternoon on the river. Whether it's boating or swimming, it's always a fun family activity. One Wednesday last month, however, turned into an extraordinary day. "We were just watching our little girl swim when we noticed the fire department and ambulance across the river at Glascock's Landing," Rich said. Curiosity got the best of him and, against his wishes, Rich and his family headed across the river. "As we got closer, the firemen started motioning me to come closer, so I thought they might need our help." When they got closer, they saw a boy hanging on to a rope in a deep area along the large boat docking station.

"It took both my brother-in-law and me to pull him up," Rich said. "He was pretty scared."

The boy had been swimming further up the river when the current had taken him downstream. Rich, who is certified in CPR and Standard First Aid, was prepared to help in the situation. Modestly, he says, "It really wasn't that big of a deal." The boy, however, had been hanging on for quite some time and was too exhausted to pull himself up into the boat. Those who helped with the rescue agree that Rich and his family were in the right place at the right time, and they are thankful for Rich's curiosity.

Rich Sanders, Hannibal Maintenance, poses in front of the Mississippi River above where he and his family rescued a 15-year-old boy last month.

Reporter Sits in on "Seat Of Your Pants" Tour

Tonya Hawkins, a reporter for the *Lincoln County Journal*, enjoyed the ride along as MoDOT management drove the SRI van through Lincoln County last month for the "Seat Of Your Pants" tour. "I learned so much," Tonya said.

"It was really exciting to see what specifics they were looking at."

DE Kirk Juranas reported that senior management was impressed with the smoother roads in northeast Missouri.

Kirk, along with Dave Silvester, Mark Giessinger and Butch Mundle, even had a chance to stop by the Mineola rest area to see how the work there was progressing. "Our crews have done a fantastic job in renovating the rest areas," he said. "We are very pleased with their work."

Tonya Hawkins, between Don Hillis and Kirk Juranas, is the reporter who rode along through the NE District.

New Retiree Newsletter

The first issue of *Beyond MoDOT* was received by nearly 200 retirees last month. "Retired MoDOT Northeast District employees have contacted our department about receiving more frequent communication from the Northeast District," said Marisa Brown, community relations manager. Since MoDOT combined all district newsletters two years ago and modified the rules for content, much of the information the retirees receive is not timely. The retirees wanted to know who was retiring before they retired, who had passed away and activities within the district.

Beyond MoDOT is published monthly and available from the NE District internal home page at http://wwwi/intranet/d3/.

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Runners Will Cross the Mississippi River

The surgeon general has announced that for the first time in 100 years, our children's life expectancy is shorter than their parents. It is with this premise the northeast Missouri chapter of the American Heart Association will be encouraging runners and walkers to get fit during their first annual 5K run/walk and 10K run to be held Sept. 23.

"We wanted to do something that would really draw people's attention to this startling statistic, and we think inviting them to run and walk across the Mark Twain Memorial Bridge in Hannibal will do that," said Lois Damron, chairperson of the event.

The Mississippi River Run is taking a lot of coordination among state and local agencies, including MoDOT, Illinois DOT, both states' highway patrols, the city of Hannibal and hundreds of other volunteers who are putting on the event. MoDOT will set up the traffic control across the bridge. For more information about the event, go to www.mississippiriverrun.com.

Around the District...

Mike Hagerty and James Cox are some of the sign crew team who have been installing bigger signs across the district. Any ideas where this one was placed? Can you see the difference below?

Terry Hall, Warrenton Maintenance, talks with a Highway Garden visitor at the State Fair during NE District's host day.

D4
KansasCityArea

2006 Construction is in Full Swing

by Steve Porter

Downtown bridges are gone at Oak, Locust and Truman Road, the eastbound I-70 bridge over Manchester Trafficway is fixed and new lanes are open in the Triangle.

Mark it up as another good start for MoDOT's 2006 construction season in the Kansas City area.

There's still plenty to do, and most work is under way, but three big projects are drawing the most attention from motorists and the public:

- Interstate 435 Bridge at the Missouri River – Rehabilitation of the bridge deck is completed on two of the three northbound lanes and progressing on the second southbound lane. The work has reduced traffic to two narrow lanes in each direction throughout the spring and summer. All lanes are expected to be open late this fall.
- The Triangle – New alignment of southbound Interstate 435 to southbound Route 71 and a third eastbound lane of Interstate 470 opened late this summer. Access at Red Bridge Road is scheduled to open in the next month, and by late this season, all Route 71 traffic between Red Bridge and Blue Ridge Boulevard will shift to collector ramps now under construction. That will set the stage for the last Triangle project, reconstructing mainline 71 from Red Bridge to Blue Ridge. The massive project is on schedule for completion by late 2008.
- Downtown Loop – Rehabilitation of pavement and bridges on Interstate 670, Interstates 29/35 and replacement of bridges over Interstate 670 have closed northbound Interstates 29/35 on the west side of the downtown loop from Interstate 35 to Interstate 70 through at least September. Construction is soon to begin on new bridges over I-670 at Oak, Locust and Truman Road, while milling and resurfacing of I-670 in the south leg of the loop will be done during off-peak and nighttime hours. Completion of all loop work is scheduled for September 2007.

Although there are dozens of preventative maintenance projects ranging from asphalt overlays to chip seals, and more than 30 Smooth Roads Initiative projects to diamond-grind, mill and resurface state routes, a score of projects are already completed at the season's midpoint.

Route 58 in Belton finished early this year, widening to three lanes with four roundabouts. Route 33 in Clay County also was widened to three lanes in Kearney, and Route 150 was resurfaced between Routes 291 and 71 in southern Jackson County, all completed before the end of July.

Also completed are:

- Six new bridges and new highway lanes of Route 13 between Richmond and Route J in Ray County
- A new bridge on Route A over Wakenda Creek in Ray County
- Slide repairs and resurfacing of Route 58 two miles south of Route 50 at Centerview in Johnson County
- Resurfacing of Route 18 from Business 13 to Pennsylvania Street at Clinton in Henry County
- Diamond grinding east- and westbound lanes of Route 45 from Cosby Avenue to south of Chatham Avenue in Platte County
- Resurfacing of Route C from Route 92 to Cookingham Drive in Platte County
- Resurfacing and shoulder sealing of east- and westbound I-70 from Route Z to Johnson Drive in Lafayette County.

Much of this season's work has been scheduled for nighttime hours, but because of the high volume of projects, contractors have been given flexibility to work various hours to stay on pace for completion by the end of 2006.

Safety Emphasis is Paying Off

by Joel Blobaum

District 4 Safety Officer Joe Jarboe says he's never seen anything like it before. And that's a good thing.

Through the end of June, the Kansas City District had recorded only one lost-time injury, accounting for one lost workday, through the first half of 2006. Reported incidences are also down.

Jarboe said a couple of factors could be at work. "First, supervisors have become more proactive and are emphasizing safety with employees – including disciplinary action when it's warranted," he said. "The new pre-employment post-offer physicals, as well as some re-engineering that has taken place, are also having a positive impact."

Regardless of the cause, Jarboe won't argue with the results. "Considering all the work going on between the Smooth Roads Initiative and our regular construction and maintenance operations, I don't know if we're getting good or lucky," he said.

Or, as Jarboe acknowledges, it could be some of both.

Neighboring Districts Lend a Hand with Sign Replacement

by Joel Blobaum

District 4 Signing Supervisor Darrell Daugherty is getting by with a little help from his new friends.

The Smooth Roads Initiative presented the Kansas City District with a tall order: Bring 17,000 highway signs across the district up to current standards. For the last 14 months, Daugherty's D4 crews have been supplemented by a variety of MoDOT personnel from Districts 1, 2 and 5.

The extra help has kept the sign replacement project right on schedule. "We've replaced well over 10,000 signs to date, so we're well on our way," Daugherty said in late July. "I see no problem in being finished by the end of the year."

Daugherty said unsolicited offers of help came in almost as soon as District 4 received its marching orders. District 5 workers went to work on Route 50 in Johnson County, and crews from the Carrollton Maintenance Facility in District 2 took on Interstate 35 signs in Clay County. District 1 personnel, including traffic department and bridge crew workers, replaced signs along I-29 in Platte County; they'll also work on Route 291 in Clay County.

"They did a beautiful job, and I think they enjoyed it because it gave them something new to do," Daugherty said. "Getting that kind of help without asking for it really makes you proud to be associated with MoDOT."

The opportunity also opened up an information exchange between the District 1 and District 4 sign shops. Employees from the St. Joseph and Kansas City facilities will spend time in each other's facilities to observe operations and exchange work practices.

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Summer Interns Gain Real-World Experience

by Jason Crain

District 4 employed 10 enthused and anxious college students for summer internships. Working in multiple fields, from construction sites to the district headquarters, these young men gained work experience while providing a helpful addition to the MoDOT staff:

- Michael Giles, automotive technology, Longview Community College
- Jason Neal, engineering, University of Kansas
- Jonathan Kaiser, civil engineering, University of Missouri
- Johnny Swartz, automotive technology, State Fair Community College
- Isaac Ferguson, civil engineering, University of Missouri at Rolla
- Ryan Livingston, civil engineering, University of Iowa
- Bret Cox, automotive technology, State Fair Community College
- Joshua Tinkley, civil engineering, University of Missouri at Rolla
- Joseph Presswood, civil engineering, University of Kansas
- Jason Crain, marketing and Spanish, Morehouse College

Interns receive hands-on training relevant to their particular area of study, and earn money doing it. The students are like any other worker at MoDOT. They attend meetings, work out in the field, and use all of the skills that they are studying in school.

"It's a win/win situation. We get a dependable worker that can assist with repairs and they get real life experience in the shop," said Mechanics Supervisor Maurice Jones. "It's the lifeblood of our department. There is a shortage of technicians. If we can catch them early, fresh out of college, maybe they will think more about joining us here."

In addition to the automotive program, MoDOT offers internships and cooperative education programs in civil engineering, accounting, computer science, journalism and communications, and business administration. Wages are determined by the number of credit hours students have earned and their number of summers in the program.

"This is a good experience," said Jason Neal, who spent his summer at the Truman Road Project Office. "I'm really learning a lot about day-to-day interaction between public and private sectors and I enjoy working with the contractors."

Their real-world summer experiences are showing these students the expectations and responsibilities of working at the state level. And they might also be marking the beginning of their careers with MoDOT!

Jason Crain

University of Missouri at Rolla civil engineering major Joshua Tinkley works on an Interstate 470 project during his summer internship at MoDOT.

D5 Central

Officials Tour Camden County Route 5 Project

by Holly Dentner

As they made their way through the steep grades of the Route 5 construction site, a group of state and local officials got an in-depth tour of the project that will widen and realign the road through Camden County.

U.S. Congressman Ike Skelton toured the area on Thursday, Aug. 10, riding in a shuttle bus with State Representative Wayne Cooper and Camdenton Mayor Kerry Shannon. Officials from McAninch Corporation, the project contractor, and several MoDOT officials also joined the tour. They started at the Camdenton maintenance building and drove across the rugged terrain of the construction site.

Work on the new Route 5 began in May and includes grading, drainage and bridge construction from south of the Niangua Bridge to near Route 7. Seven million cubic yards of soil and rock will be excavated during work, making it the largest grading project in MoDOT's history. The project has been divided into phases and also includes construction of two interchanges and four bridges.

The portion toured on Aug. 10 will be completed and ready for paving in late 2008. When the next phase is completed, Camden County Route 5 will be a straighter, wider four-lane divided highway with shoulders.

Scott Snelling

This track hoe has a 10 cubic yard bucket, twice the size of standard track hoes. It can fill the dump truck pictured in about three scoops.

Those who took the tour got to see the huge earth-moving equipment needed for the excavation. Many of the track hoes and bulldozers were so large they had to be shipped in pieces and assembled on site. They also saw dump trucks that can hold 60 cubic yards of material, almost three times the amount a standard size truck could carry.

The tour group was encouraged to check the Central District's Web site, *www.modot.org/central*, where a special "What's Happening Now" page has been created to offer regular updates on Route 5 progress. The Web site includes photos and a weekly update on how many cubic yards of earth have been excavated at the construction site.

Kristin Gerber

Intermediate Construction Technician Joe Martin explains to Congressman Ike Skelton how the culvert box behind them will help control drainage around the new highway.

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Fairgoers Get the 'Arrive Alive' Message at District 5 Host Day

by Holly Dentner

State fair visitors learned that safety belts save lives and got a chance to see that alcohol and driving don't mix at the Central District's host day on Aug. 10.

Ashley Reinkemeyer

State Fair visitors could see the damage caused by a traffic crash and learn how the driver survived. The display was meant to remind people to buckle up and arrive alive.

District 5 made an extra effort to promote seat belt use this year by displaying a wrecked utility truck near the highway building. Putting the truck on display meant that fairgoers could see the massive damage to the truck and hopefully realize that seat belts can make a huge difference in a traffic crash. The driver of the truck was wearing his safety belt when he lost control, swerved off the road, and hit a tree in Cooper County this June. The impact crushed the truck cab interior, but four hours after the crash the driver was released from the hospital with only a few cuts and bruises. His safety belt kept him secured tightly in the truck cab and prevented him from getting thrown around inside the cab or ejected from the vehicle.

Ashley Reinkemeyer

A fairgoer tries to "walk the line" while wearing a pair of fatal vision goggles. Traffic Studies Specialist Tamara Pitts and Think First Director Michelle Gibler guided participants through the course.

Fairgoers also saw a special median guard cable display created by the district and Central Office. The display included a 12-foot section of actual guard cable attached to posts, similar to what motorists would see driving along I-70 or I-44. The display also included photos and statistical information to inform fairgoers about median guard cable success in Missouri.

With the help of our Coalition for Roadway Safety partners, the district also set up a "Fatal Vision" course to show fairgoers how drinking alcohol can affect coordination and reaction time, making even the simplest tasks difficult.

Participants first completed five simple tasks while being timed with a stopwatch. They tried to walk a straight line, use a calculator, pour a glass of water, place a ball on top of a traffic cone, and balance on one foot. Then they put on a pair of fatal vision goggles and completed the tasks again. The goggles simulate various levels of impairment and made it possible to see and feel the impact of alcohol on the brain.

Not surprisingly, participants found it much more difficult to complete the tasks correctly and it took much longer to complete them with the goggles.

While fairgoers had a good time with the goggles, we made sure to emphasize how significant the results were. No matter how skilled people normally are, alcohol affects the brain and no amount of skill can offset that fact.

Holly Dentner

Construction Project Office Assistant Penny Priest hands out stickers and maps while Senior Traffic Specialist John Kuhlman catches up with David Lairmore of Russellville.

D6
St. Louis Area

Motorist Assist Operator Ken Hoierman
July 30, 1968 - August 15, 2006

In a blink of an eye, Motorist Assist Operator Ken Hoierman was tragically struck down while doing what he did best: keeping others safe.

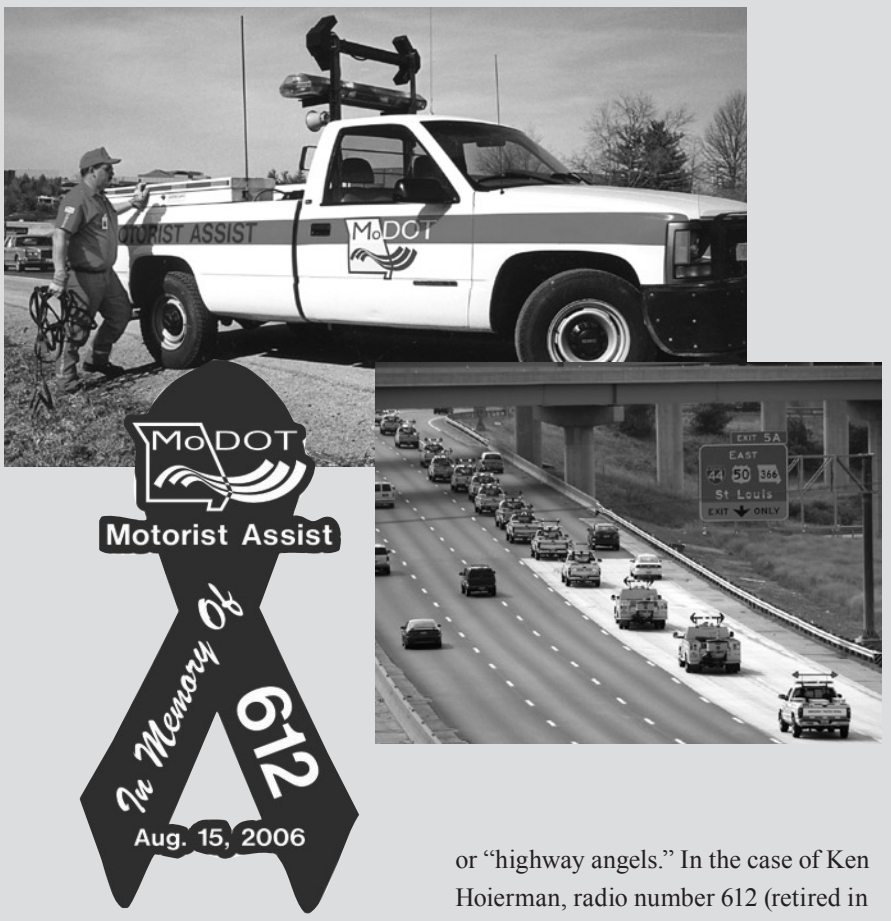
On a sunny Tuesday morning, August 15, 2006, Motorist Assist Operators Ken Hoierman and Tony Carusa answered a call to assist police and fire fighters at a car fire on southbound Interstate 55 at Bayless Road. Ken and Tony set up traffic control to keep the firefighters and emergency responders safe by setting out cones and placing their vehicles in the adjacent lanes.

In a split second, Ken was hit by a motorist who did not see the armada of flashing warning lights from the two Motorist Assist trucks. Lifesavers on the scene and a passing motorist who was a physician worked furiously to stabilize his condition. Five hours later, Ken lost his fight for life.

Hundreds of family, friends, colleagues and admirers from all over the region paid the ultimate tribute to Ken by participating in his memorial service and procession. A mile-long procession of MoDOT Motorist Assist and maintenance trucks, police, wreckers and environmental emergency response companies convoyed to the funeral down I-64 and I-270. Gravois Road, a main artery into the heart of Affton, was shut down to make room for all who attended. Police officers stood by in formation as the hearse passed. From the funeral home, more than a 100-vehicle procession escorted Ken's family to the cemetery.

But, it is not in his death that we will remember Ken Hoierman; it is how we knew him in life.

First and foremost, Ken was a dedicated father and husband, a son, an uncle, a valued colleague and a friend to many. He was a man who dedicated his career in keeping people safe in the literally thousands of assists he conducted in his 11 years of service in Motorist Assist. Many more people around the district knew Ken through his other job of helping others and teaching others to extend the gift of saving lives. By that, he was a Red Cross Certified CPR instructor who taught hundreds of people CPR and first aid. A legacy that will no doubt have far reaching affects for years to come.



Many times, the people they help refer to Motorist Assist as "highway heroes" or "highway angels." In the case of Ken Hoierman, radio number 612 (retired in his honor), nothing can be truer.

Thanks for everything you have done for us, Biggins. "612" is code seven, but he will remain in our memories and hearts forever.

Lights Out: D6 Responds to Storm Damage

by Katie Peterson

A storm producing hurricane-force winds around 80 miles per hour swept through the St. Louis area on July 19 leaving many Distric 6 employees in the dark at home, work and on the road.

More than 500,000 residents were without power in what Ameren called the worst power outage in St. Louis history. Jefferson County and south St. Louis County were the hardest hit. Approximately 300-400 traffic signals were offline, numerous trees were downed, construction signs were displaced and message boards were over turned.

MoDOT maintenance crews worked around the clock coordinating efforts with city and Ameren crews to clear the roads of debris and construction barrels and cones. The Motorist Assist crew was on patrol and received extra help from the Emergency Response crew and Maintenance staff. Crews responded to a Lambert Airport terminal awning that had blown onto Interstate 70, numerous accidents and lost camera power in the Lindbergh Tunnel (the tunnel requires 24-hour supervision).

Incident Management Coordinator Bruce Pettus said, "The commitment by Maintenance and Traffic created a good partnership and a great effort."

The estimated 300-400 out of the 1,000 traffic signals that were dark was a main safety concern of the district. Stop signs were placed first at the most critical intersections without signal power. So many stop signs were needed that maintenance crews ran out. Nevertheless, signal crews continued to work around the clock to resolve and repair the various storm damage to signals.

High winds overturned two tractor-trailers just west of the Discovery Bridge across the Missouri River. Vehicles travelling west turned around and headed eastbound in the westbound lanes.

Urban Traffic Supervisor Neil Schlichting said, "Many signals' components were also damaged, possibly from lightening or power surges during electric return."

In addition, MoDOT project offices in Maryland Heights and Bellefontaine and the general services station located at Route 141 and Route 40 were without power. Other buildings in Hampton, Ballas and Normandy also had no power, totaling 21 MoDOT structures in the dark all at one time. While most employees in these offices are usually out in the field, some were temporarily relocated to other offices. Most MoDOT buildings and traffic signals were restored by July 27.

Gov. Matt Blunt declared a state of emergency as a result of the significant storm damage and power outages. National Guard troops arrived July 20 to assist in relief efforts. Ameren crews from 12 states were called in to the area.

Ameren announced on July 28 that power was fully restored to St. Louis from outages caused by storm damage. The massive damage of the first storm and a second severe storm on July 21 contributed to the 10-day span.

Area charities donated food and water and provided cooling centers for residents. Social service and government agencies helped those in need during the power outage and switched to recovery efforts days after power was restored.

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D7 Southwest

All District 7 Project Offices Receive Incentives

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

Even though most employees always work hard to control costs on construction projects, being rewarded for their effort is a welcome gesture.

Thirty-six District 7 construction employees received $400 a piece in incentives under the Performance Plus pilot program. More than $52,000 was distributed to 175 employees statewide as a reward for saving more than $4.2 million from April to June in project cost overruns.

Carthage Senior Construction Technician Mary Black said she plans to use the bonus to help pay some bills. Black said she likes the idea behind Performance Plus, as long as "we take great care in approaching our contractors with courtesy and professionalism. Some bitterness may develop if we allow the performance bonus to become too much of a driving force while completing the jobs."

Could the Jasper County Route 249 ramps near Carterville be part of a future Performance Plus incentive?

District 7 was the only district in which all of its project offices earned the incentive. The Neosho office saved 3.25 percent on its two eligible projects: grading, building bridges and paving on McDonald County Route 71 from south of Pineville to the Arkansas state line, and resurfacing on Jasper/Newton Route 59 from Interstate 44 to Route MM south of Diamond.

The Carthage office shaved 4.34 percent from its diamond grinding projects on Lawrence County I-44 from Route 97 to Route 39, Jasper County Business Route 71 from Route 171 to 10th Street in Webb City, Jasper County Route 71 from Route 96 to I-44, Vernon County Route 71 from near Route 54 to Route E, and Jasper County Route 66 from Schifferdecker Avenue to Florida Avenue.

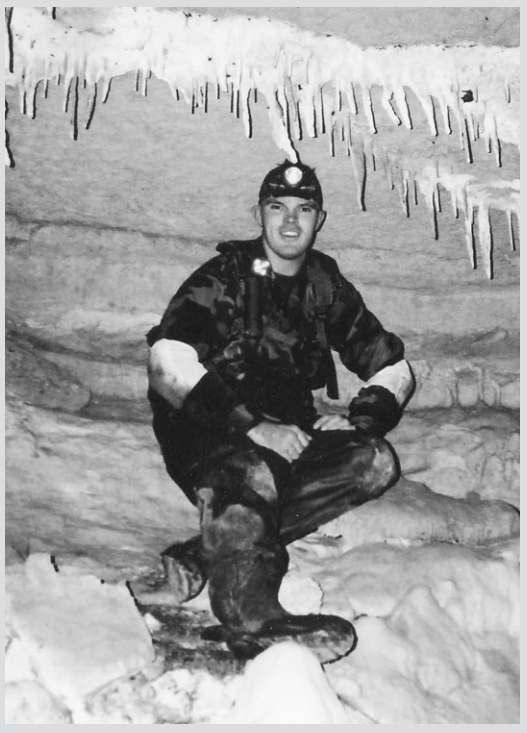
The Nevada office came in at 1.85 percent below the bid amount on its contract leveling courses on Cedar County Route 39, St. Clair/Cedar County Route 82, Jasper/Lawrence County Route 96 and Newton County Route 43, and resurfacing Barton County Route 160 from the Kansas state line to Route 71.

"It's nice to be able to reward people for their efforts, and money is a great way to do that," said Neosho Resident Engineer Steve Campbell. "I hope similar programs are developed for other areas of MoDOT."

Flatworm Find Published in Scientific Journal

by Lori Marble

Just add it to their long list of credentials. In 2002, District 7 survey employees Steve Dickson, Brad McCloud and Justin Forrest explored and had the honor of naming a previously unknown cave on the newly four-laned Route 71. Inside the cave, which they named Stadin Elbow Cave, the existence of flatworms previously unknown to exist in Missouri was discovered. And now, that discovery is detailed in *The Southwestern Naturalist,* June 2006 issue.



Justin Forrest sits in what is now Stadin Elbow Cave in McDonald County.

The research publishing wheel turns notoriously slow, but when the only flatworm experts are part of the Zoological Museum at the University of Amsterdam, the wait can take up to four years. The flatworm discovered, *Dendrocoelopsis american,* was known to only inhabit subterranean streams and springs in Oklahoma and Arkansas. The discovery in Stadin Elbow Cave is the first such sighting in Missouri.

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Highway Advisory Radios New to the District

by Lori Marble

CMS boards notify motorists to tune into 530 AM for highway construction.

Instead of a sound booth, it's a storage room. Instead of fancy noise-cancellation headphones, it's a telephone handset. Instead of audiences of hundreds, maybe thousands, it's the motorists buzzing through a five-mile area of Interstate 44 south of Joplin. Instead of listeners calling in requests and registering for contests, it's information that could save a life.

Through the combined efforts of the Signals, Traffic and Community Relations departments at District 7, the Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) system was put in place in August. As is evident across Missouri, MoDOT and District 7 are in the middle of one of the largest construction and maintenance seasons to date. Before work began on a major resurfacing project for 1-44, district personnel were looking for any and all means to lessen the confusion and frustration of motorists.

"We knew that the CMS boards alone were not enough," said Jennifer Hinson, traffic operations engineer. "The HAR system allows us the flexibility of expanding upon our CMS messages."

Radio messages regarding I-44 efforts were updated each morning, based upon information relayed by Resident Engineer Mike Middleton. If decisions on work schedules were changed during the day or additional public announcement were needed, Community Relations staff could easily add or modify the messages.

D8 Springfield Area

Bob Edwards

Branson Senior Construction Inspector Brett Foster explains the delay to travelers stopped on Route 65 as final preparations are made to open the new interchange at Hollister.

65/Hollister Milestone: New Interchange Opens

by Bob Edwards

The new interchange on Route 65 at Hollister is open – a major milestone in the $19.5 million project – but significant work remains to be completed on the project south of Branson.

Traffic congestion, especially along Route 65, will continue to be a challenge through the next two to three months until:

- The last traffic signal is removed on Route 65 at existing Business 65.
- The new Business 65 overpass serving downtown Hollister to the east is open.
- Two new lanes are open through Hollister to the city's south edge and across Lake Taneycomo between Branson and Hollister (a separate but related project).

"The interchange itself does not solve the traffic problems," said Assistant District Engineer Andy Mueller. "Folks won't see the full benefit of that project until that last intersection (Business 65) is closed, the flyover bridge is open and the signal is removed."

The Hollister interchange was opened Aug. 3 during a hectic morning when traffic had to be cleared from the area.

"I'll bet I had 45 phone calls in 15 minutes," said Branson Senior Construction Inspector Brett Foster, exaggerating only a little.

As he prepared for the opening, Foster checked with various MoDOT and contractor supervisors and workers and made several loops through the project to be sure signs and striping and other details were in place.

The city of Hollister and Taney County joined forces with MoDOT and contributed funds to the project, set for completion by late fall.

Amendment 3 made it possible for MoDOT to four-lane Route 65 between Branson and Hollister and to begin four-laning the highway to the Missouri-Arkansas line, with new lanes ready for traffic by the end of 2007.

Angela Eden

Traffic moves through the new Route 65/Hollister interchange shortly after it is opened on Aug. 3.

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Bob Edwards

D8 at Work

District Garage Shop Mechanic Randy Cottengim (top photo) installs an auger boom on a sign truck.

Customer Service Representative Tracy Davault, one of 30 employees who took turns working the district's booth at the Ozark Empire Fair in Springfield, records information from a fairgoer about a highway concern. The district gave out 7,500 highway maps during the fair's 10-day run.

TRAC 'Volunteer of the Year' to D8's Julie Haden-Stiles

by Angela Eden

Concocting an "asphalt cookie" recipe. Designing miniature mag-lev cars. Piecing together surprisingly sturdy toothpick-and-marshmallow bridges.

These and other hands-on activities employed by District 8 Senior Highway Designer Julie Haden-Stiles helped her earn MoDOT's first-ever Volunteer of the Year award for 2006 in the student-oriented Transportation and Civil Engineering program, or TRAC.

Cathy Morrison

Senior Highway Designer Julie Haden-Stiles, right, goes through an engineering trivia exercise with a student from Jefferson City during MoDOT's summer TRAC Transportation Institute.

TRAC's goal is to increase the number of civil engineering college graduates by introducing middle school and high school students to the field through engineering-based educational projects.

Haden-Stiles is part of a team that works with students from Buffalo Prairie Middle School in Buffalo and Republic High School. Her teammates are Transportation Project Designer and District 8 TRAC coordinator Will Walker, Tranportation Project Designer Stacy Reese and Senior Highway Designer Aaron Jaeger.

In March, by the way, the four employees' involvement in TRAC garnered them the statewide "Building the Bridges of Diversity" award from MoDOT's Equal Opportunity Division.

Haden-Stiles drew notice for her strong belief in the TRAC program and her efforts to build support for it inside and outside of MoDOT, said MoDOT Senior Human Resources Specialist David Williams, TRAC regional director.

"She has a sincere interest in conveying information to students," Williams said. Plus, "She is enthusiastic."

Walker, who nominated her for the award, noted her dedication.

"Julie goes all out," he said.

Haden-Stiles said simply that she enjoys her interaction with the students.

"I like watching them learn how they can apply what they learn to the real world," she said.

"Talkin' Transportation" Call-In Radio Show
KWTO 560 AM, Springfield
10-10:50 a.m. Wednesdays
radiospringfield.com

D9 SouthCentral

Willow Springs Construction Office Earns Performance Plus Bonus

According to Resident Engineer Phill Knott, his staff has always striven to be on time and in budget with their work. He said the recent Performance Plus bonuses awarded to members of the Willow Springs construction office were just confirmation they are getting the job done and doing it well. This is the first of the Performance Plus bonuses to be awarded in the South Central District.

"This was a great way to recognize the excellent work they have done all along," Knott said. "The staff was very appreciative. I believe the department has made a step in the right direction with this recognition program."

During the second quarter of 2006, Knott's office completed four micro surfacing projects, all matching the criteria for Performance Plus. These projects include: Route 60/63 in West Plains; Route 63 in Howell and Oregon counties; Routes 19 and J in Dent County and Business Loop 44 and Route H in Pulaski County.

"The experience level of the staff plays a large role in their successes," Knott explained. "Having a seasoned staff helps move projects forward and make sure quality remains high while costs are contained. I can set the course for their work, but they worked together as a team to get the job done."

Staff members receiving the bonus included: Brad Bansberg, Jeremy Crudgington, Jason Ferguson, Anna Hobbs, Willie Johnson, Phill Knott, Tim McDaniel, Dennis Mitchell, Chris Moore, Heath McNew, David Prock, Larry Rothermich and Rodney Wiles.

Front row, from left: Dennis Mitchell, Tim McDaniel and Anna Hobbs; Second row: Larry Rothermich and Chris Moore; Third row: David Prock and Phill Knott; Fourth row: Rodney Wiles and Heath McNew.

Storm Damage Calls MoDOT to Action

July was a heavy-hitting weather month for several areas of the state. The South Central District saw storms in two areas with high straight winds that downed trees, resulted in power outages and damaged MoDOT facilities. Maintenance crews responded quickly to clear the roadways of debris and keep traffic moving.

July 19 – Northeast portion of the district receives damage

The northeast portion of the district suffered from the same storm that ripped through St. Louis, leaving hundreds of thousands without power for several days. According to Area Clerk Pam Racer, the damage was extensive and included homes of employees as well as the Belleview Maintenance Facility.

Late that evening, the clouds rolled in and left downed power lines, trees and the remains of the Belleview salt storage shed in their wake. "A lot of wind damage occurred throughout the area," Racer explained. "The home of Seasonal Crew Worker Nick Lambert had a very near miss with a large cedar tree."

It was mid-morning July 21 before power was restored to the maintenance building. Even then, phone service and electricity were intermittent.

July 21 – Southern portion of the district takes a turn with severe weather

Residents of Howell and Oregon counties were hearing reports of the aftermath from just two days before when the next round knocked on their own doors. Packing quite a punch, the storm blew through in the early evening, downing trees and power lines and landing a barn roof on Route 160 south of West Plains.

Alton Maintenance Supervisor Jed Underwood said MoDOT crews cleaned up 40 to 50 trees and treetops in the Thayer, Koshkonong and Alton area. In addition, Underwood said there was a lot of damage to buildings including roofs being blown off. The roof of a real estate office near the Arkansas state line landed in the middle of Route 63.

According to Underwood, a tree fell through a two-story home in Thayer and ended up in the basement. One tree, which had fallen across power lines had to wait until Saturday night. "We waited for Howell Oregon Electric Cooperative to shut the power off before we cut it up," he said. "All of our crews in the area, including incarcerated, were working to clean up the damage."

High winds left behind a mangled salt storage shed at the Belleview Maintenance Facility on July 19.

Incarcerated crew members could be seen cutting up fallen trees July 25, several days after a storm that tore through Howell and Oregon counties.

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D10 Southeast

Neighbors Chip in for Chip Seal

by Mary Kalinowski

The North Area recently pioneered the district's first chip seal project under the department's new focus on minor routes. Routes C, N and FF in Madison County were improved July 24-26.

District 10 received instructions and assistance from District 9.

"This project was a great partnership with District 9," said Area Engineer Dale Kinnemann. "The quality is something we can all be proud of and a positive example of our new statewide direction."

Twenty-three tandem trucks with various personnel from seven maintenance sheds worked together.

Preventative maintenance and a smoother driving surface are the major benefits of the chip seal operation. This project seals cracks to keep out moisture and prolongs the life of the pavement.

Good neighbors always give assistance. Brian Fortner, maintenance superintendent from the South Central District, sent almost an entire chip seal crew to help with instructions.

A chip spreader, roller, sign crew, flaggers and 16 tandem trucks came over and chipped in for the chip seal.

"This was a great learning experience for everyone involved," said John Tutt, maintenance superintendent from St. Francois and Madison counties. "It showed how well the employees can work together teaching and learning from each other when given a chance to show their skills."

Collaboration proved to work well. The two districts completed a total of 46 lane miles in two and a half days. The crew averaged 19 lane miles a day with a 100-mile round trip from the job site to the local quarry.

"MoDOT continues to field some of the best quality people in our maintenance work forces," said Tutt. "This chip seal job between two districts shows when given the opportunity and the right equipment, they will run with the best."

The accomplishment of this chip seal project demonstrates what can be achieved when neighboring districts work together.

Teens Gain 'Team Spirit'

Local conference teaches teens about roadway safety

by Angie Thomason

High school students throughout Missouri recently gathered in Cape Girardeau to participate in the 12th annual Team Spirit Leadership Training Conference. Team Spirit is an event where high school students have the opportunity to learn how to become more responsible drivers. With the knowledge they learn, they encourage their peers to do the same.

Eight schools participated at the regional conference. Malden, Hayti, Naylor and New Madrid County schools represented the Southeast District.

Sharee Galnore and Lynn Ware with Safe Communities coordinated the three-day event and are partners with MoDOT and the Southeast Coalition for Roadway Safety.

Lt. Buddy Davis with the Cape Girardeau Police Department hosted a DWI workshop where he educated students about how alcohol and drugs can impair drivers.

"Anything that can impair you while you drive is enough reason for us to charge you with a DWI," said Davis.

Students also watched a live docu-drama, which is another way for the teams to realize the consequences of irresponsible driving. The reenactment of a traffic crash made students rethink the decision about getting in a car when someone has been drinking and the consequences of not wearing a safety belt.

Angie Thomason

This docudrama reenacted the scene of a drunk driving crash. Cape Girardeau emergency respondents participated at the Team Spirit Conference.

At the closing ceremonies, the teams shared their action plans. Action plans are a way for the teens to create a driving awareness plan, which will be implemented throughout the school year at their respective schools. This year, almost every team decided their focus would be to promote teen seat belt usage.

"I have never seen this many teams choose seat belt awareness as their plan," said Riverview Spirit Team Leader, Chris Nipper. "In the past, teams have usually focused on DWI awareness, but I am happy this year's teams realize there is a teen seat belt problem and these students want to do something about it."

Some teams suggested passing out "Smarties" and "Dumdums" to those students who wear or don't wear a safety belt. Naylor High School wants to host a "Buckle Up Booster Bonanza," which will be a week long event. Other high schools want to host "Click-A-Thons" or "Click-It Challenges." Team Spirit gives students the confidence and resources they need to achieve their safety goals.

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Missouri Blueprint for Safer Roadways

Also Known As: Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety and Southeast Coalition for Roadway Safety.

Area: Each MoDOT district has its own coalition focusing on regional activities. The District 10 coalition is referred to as the Southeast Coalition for Roadway Safety.

Goal: 1,000 statewide fatalities or fewer by 2008.

Upcoming Regional Activities: The Southeast Coalition will have a booth with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, district local partner, at the SEMO District Fair in Cape Girardeau, Sept. 9-16.

The coalition will be conducting child safety seat checks and using the "Buckle Up" stencil to promote safety belt usage.

Upcoming Statewide Activities: Battle of the Belt, Impaired Driving Enforcement Campaign and Child Safety Seat Awareness.

District Contact: Jay Lancaster, district design liaison, (573) 472-5264 or jay.lancaster@modot.mo.gov or visit www.saveMOlives.com.

Recent Retirement

Mark Duncan retired Aug. 1 after 39 years with MoDOT. He was a maintenance supervisor in Williamsville.

Connections

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

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Additional copies are available upon request. Suggestions, questions and comments are always welcome.

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Battle of the Belt Challenges Teens to Buckle Up

by Sally Oxenhandler

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, in conjunction with American Family Insurance, is taking a regional teen safety belt initiative statewide this year.

Battle of the Belt is an educational program in which local high schools compete against each other to increase safety belt use and potentially save lives. The Ozark Chapter of the Emergency Nurses Association has been involved with Battle of the Belt in several regions. The coalition is hoping to increase participation by working through its regions to offer the competition to high schools throughout the state.

Battle of the Belt, which runs from Oct. 1 to Nov. 30, involves various educational opportunities to inform students of the benefits of wearing safety belts, as well as the consequences of not wearing safety belts. There are three phases to the challenge. In the first phase, students conduct surprise safety belt checks in the school parking lots to determine the school's safety belt use rate. The second phase involves an educational blitz that is peer designed. After the education blitz, students conduct a final surprise safety belt check to determine if there has been a change in safety belt use.

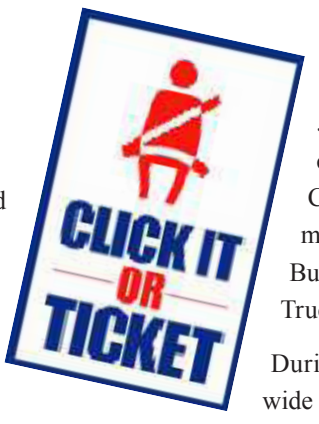
At the end of the campaign, two $500 prizes will be awarded statewide to the school with the highest safety belt use and to the school with the most improved safety belt use. Two $250 prizes will be given to the school in each region with the highest safety belt use and the school with the most improved safety belt use. American Family Insurance donated the prize money for the initiative.

Teens are an important audience to target with safety belt messages. MoDOT, in conjunction with the Missouri Safety Center, recently conducted a study that showed only 56 percent of Missouri teenagers wear safety belts. Young drivers comprise 10 percent of licensed drivers and are involved in 29 percent of the traffic crashes in the state. In the past three years, more than 550 young people died in Missouri traffic crashes, and 75 percent were not buckled up.

For more information about Battle of the Belt, contact your regional Blueprint representative, visit www.savemolives.com or call 800-800-BELT (2358).

Highway Safety Campaign Results

by Jackie Rogers



The Missouri State Highway Patrol and local law enforcement agencies across the state recently participated in the Click It or Ticket! Campaign – a national effort to increase safety belt and child restraint use. MoDOT's Highway Safety Division in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Missouri Safety Center awarded grants to local law enforcement agencies to assist in a national effort to enforce traffic laws and increase safety belt and child restraint use.

The campaign was extended this year to include a special effort focusing on safety belt use among drivers of pickup trucks. The extended effort for law enforcement ran from May 7 through June 4 and combined the Click It or Ticket message with Buckle Up In Your Truck.

During the statewide campaign, law enforcement officers issued nearly 21,000 tickets including 4,300 safety belt, 120 child restraint, 7,050 speeding, 78 driving while intoxicated, and approximately 9,300 tickets for other violations. During the campaign, law enforcement officers also made 33 felony arrests and 35 drug arrests.